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Editorial

Electron/proton coupling in biological energy transduction

With the organization of this special issue in memory of António Xavier we were endowed with a unique opportunity to bring together two of his most cherished aspects in research: his colleagues and their science. Because for Antonio, research was a personal passion to be lived with great intensity in the company of like minded individuals. This transpired visibly in the forceful, but always courteous, attitude that he always brought to scientific discussions. These were lively events that went beyond the bland exchange of vague words and delved deep into the nitty–gritty details of the experiments to ensure that the emerging big-picture was worth considering, and enlarging. Yes, because Antonio was a very gifted researcher that could see beyond the obvious result, but had an exquisite attention to detail that prevented the easy distraction by poor data. These characteristics, combined with his unquestionable leadership skills, made the opportunity of working with him an option not lightly dismissed. During his career of many interests, the theme pervading this special issue was particularly dear to him given the clear connections to the fundamentals of biological activity: energy transduction, and its relationship with the apparently simple phenomena of electron transfer, proton transfer and their coupling. With the selection of contributors and themes it was our purpose to assemble a tome that Antonio himself would have enjoyed reading. We leave it to each of the readers to ponder on whether we were successful.

We thank warmly all the contributors for this issue, and the excellent editorial assistance of Anne Rougeaux.

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